

Important Government Guidance on Christmas-19

The worldwide Christmas-19 pandemic threatens British lives, liberties and livelihoods, which is why we must all take precautions. The symptoms of Christmas-19 include

1. Persistent dry pubs
2. Loss of sense of taste
3. Temperatures in excess of 36C

The last of these is only likely to occur in the middle of the summer, but the second is particularly prevalent in the run-up to Christmas. Anyone with any of these symptoms must immediately contact ~~Sereø~~ NHS Test & Trace, and arrange a test at one of the nationwide testing centres, usually within 180 miles of your home. You must then quarantine at home with all the lights off for 14 days, or until you hear that your test has been negative, often within 4-6 weeks of the test. To communicate risk levels to the public, the Government has introduced a traffic light system:

- Red – the arrival of Santa in your area is imminent
- Yellow – the leaves are falling off the Christmas tree, but Christmas is still some way off
- Green – your Christmas tree is still looking fine

C-19 spreads most rapidly in crowded indoor settings, such as shops, offices, public transport, places of worship, and Cabinet meetings. Ask yourself whether you really need to go to such places, and if you cannot avoid doing so, you must wear face coverings that cover your nose and mouth completely (false white beards are not adequate), wash your hands for at least 20 seconds whenever you get on or off a bus, and keep at least 2m from other people. 'Work' at home if at all possible. Businesses which are affected by the pandemic will be able to apply for Government support to help them through these difficult times, though probably your business will not meet the criteria. Social gatherings must obey the Rule of Six, which we think means one of

- At most 6 people may meet indoors
- At least 6 people must meet, indoors or outdoors
- You may only meet when there is a 6 in the date
- Only those aged 6 and under may meet

Regional restrictions will be applied in the worst-affected areas, to include closure of places of worship, bowling alleys, nail bars, pubs and restaurants, though long churches may serve as temporary bowling alleys if social distancing and hand sanitizing measures are in place. Once the R number is less than 1 in a region, the region will move into one of three tiers, Tier 3 being the most restricted. If you are in Tier 2 and your traffic light is Yellow, you can go to your local authority website to find out what this will mean for you, because we haven't a clue. Throughout these difficult times, we are all reliant on science and scientists, and are fortunate that our country has some of the best in the world. Our scientists will develop effective vaccines in record time (or find other countries that have) without the slightest compromise of safety and efficacy, and the Government will always follow the science, having searched thoroughly for some scientific advice that it likes.

The Government's message to the people of Britain is clear. We are facing an unprecedented threat to our way of life; but if we all act responsibly through the Christmas period, if we follow advice on social distancing, face coverings, hand hygiene, family gatherings, then we can keep the virus in check, and look forward in 2021 to what we all so desperately need at this time – a no-deal Brexit.

And remember -

Stop - Think - Regurgitate

That way, you'll protect yourself and those you love.

Judy, Chris, Ben & Stefan wish you a Merry Christmas and a better New Year!

In other news ... more did not happen than did. Sadly, all musical performances and almost all musical rehearsing was wiped out for the year, though practice has continued. In January, Chris & Ben visited Rome for a very enjoyable few days - you have to be impressed with what the Romans achieved. In February, we had some work done in the garden to install a new greenhouse and create a vegetable patch; Judy is very pleased with the results, and we have been largely self-sufficient in vegetables over the summer. In March Judy & Chris had 10 days in the Dominican Republic; it was a good break, though the weather was not great – we had days when a chill wind blew off the sea and piled sand into the swimming pools. On the flight home (17th March), the airport was virtually deserted, ours was one of the last scheduled flights to get back to the UK from the Dominican Republic. Chris collected Stefan from Manchester a few days after we got back, and lockdown started just before we had planned to get Ben, so he was in Bath until late June, working on a project. He also got a summer project to do (if you want to know what it was about, you will have to ask him to explain.) Apart from a short break for Judy & Chris in Cornwall in July, that was about all the travel for the year – but we have become much more adept with Zoom, and have even done a couple of choir recordings using a backing track ... neither is a bad substitute, but neither is the real thing!



After two thousand years, the dome of the Pantheon is still the largest unreinforced concrete structure anywhere.



The 1911 Altare della Patria towers over the Forum and the rest of Rome.



As Ben points out, the Vatican has 2.4 Popes per sq km!



St Peter's as the winter afternoon draws to a close.



Until you get inside the four-storey Coliseum, it is hard to appreciate its size.



The bronze doors of this temple in the Forum is original Roman, as is the locking mechanism which still secures it!



A very good reason to visit Italy.



Wind, rain and sand in Punta Cana.



A humming bird in the Dominican Republic.



Judy's greenhouse!



Marbles and Popcorn being cute.



This is how Google Maps sees our house!